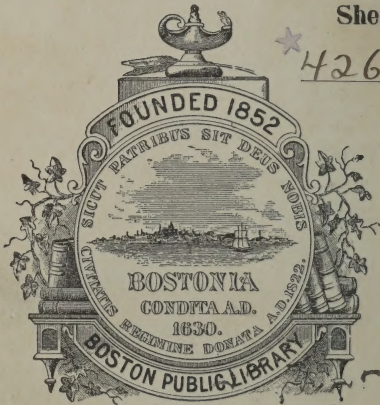




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July 22, 1882

[Can any circumstances justify men in holding their fellow-men in Slavery, without incurring guilt by so doing? The Question Answered.]

THE SUBSTANCE

OF *4265.92

MR. THOMPSON'S LECTURE

ON SLAVERY,

DELIVERED

IN THE WESLEYAN CHAPEL,

IRWELL STREET, SALFORD,

MANCHESTER, (ENG.)

MANCHESTER, (ENG.)

MANCHESTER, (ENG.)

MANCHESTER, (ENG.)

MANCHESTER:

PRINTED BY S. WHEELER AND SON, CHRONICLE OFFICE, KING ST.

BOSTON:

RE-PRINTED BY ISAAC KNAPP.

1836.

THE BUREAU

MR. THOMPSON'S LECTURE

ON SEVERAL

From 4265.62

314,656

Wendell Phillips

July 22, 1882

MANCHESTER (N.H.)

YARD LIVERY

THE

OF BOSTON

MANCHESTER

PRINTED BY THE MANCHESTER PRESS

BOSTON

NO. 100 N. BOSTON ST.

1882

THE SUBSTANCE OF A LECTURE,

Delivered Thursday evening, September 20th, 1832, in the Wesleyan Chapel, Irwell Street, Salford, Manchester, (Eng.) by George Thompson, Esq. This Lecture was delivered by Mr. Thompson soon after Mr. Borthwick, the Agent of the West Indian pro-slavery party, had publicly said that he would follow Mr. Thompson 'from place to place, like his evil genius'—how far the intention of Mr. Borthwick was effected the result of Mr. Thompson's labors fully demonstrates.

On Thursday evening last, Mr. G. THOMPSON, who for the last three weeks has been zealously laboring in the cause of negro emancipation at Liverpool, delivered a lecture in the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Irwell-street, Salford.

The lecture was announced to commence at seven o'clock. The admission was by tickets, for which there was an unprecedented demand. As early as five o'clock the doors were surrounded by a number of most respectable persons, and by half-past six the chapel was crowded by one of the most respectable auditories ever witnessed either in Manchester or Salford. We observed a considerable number of the Society of Friends present. At twenty minutes before seven Mr. Thompson was recognised walking down the aisle, attended by several of his friends, and was greeted with enthusiastic cheers. A few minutes before seven, W. Hill, Esq., the Boroughreeve, entered, and was loudly cheered. Precisely at seven o'clock Mr. Thompson, accompanied by the Boroughreeve and Mr. Peter Clare, left the vestry and ascended the pulpit stairs. Mr. Thompson came to the front of the pulpit, bowed respectfully to the assembly, and was received with immense cheers, which lasted a considerable time. The Boroughreeve briefly introduced the lecturer, and expressed a hope that during the evening there would be no de-

monstration of feeling inconsistent with the sacred character of the building in which they were assembled.

MR. THOMPSON said that it was with unfeigned gratification, though with very considerable fear, that he consented to present himself before so very large and respectable an assembly. His gratification was of a very high order, because the present was a strong proof that the interest which was awakened on the subject which was that night to engross their consideration, had not become by any means diminished, but seemed rather to have increased. He wished it might continue to be so. He wished that their zeal in so good a cause might continue to increase till victory was achieved, and that, as they proceeded in their career of mercy, they might leave behind them every thing which would sully the honor and the character of the struggle in which they were engaged. He, for one, was more than ever convinced that the cause they advocated required none of the ordinary means of making it popular—none of the ordinary means of defending it—that it was quite sufficient to trust in the high and commanding principles which were involved in the discussion, and to rely on those views which truth, unmixed with any other quality, will bear to the mind, rather than connect it with personal considerations, and make this a conflict for victory in argument rather than a triumph of mercy over oppression. And he trusted that whilst on the one hand he should avoid all compromise of principle, he should on the other avoid the use of those weapons which in some cases might be legitimate and allowable, but which in this were perfectly unnecessary, because the subject, clad in its own character, would make a strong and effectual appeal to the heart. And if he did, when he last had the honor of appearing before an auditory in that place, under the influence of strong feeling, and from a conviction, which at the present time he must again express, that a most unhallowed and lawless—though he believed in the end it would prove to their own cause a most beneficial—attempt was in progress to retard the accomplishment of the object dear to all his hearers—if with the knowledge of this fact, and being personally involved in the matter, he did give expression to feelings and sentiments not perfectly necessary in the advocacy of the cause—let it be recollected that it required no ordinary

measure of Christian charity and self-command to restrain the feelings and check the lips when upon the threshold of giving utterance to sentiments under which men are laboring—and when a cause based upon Christianity, and on whose side are enlisted all the attributes of humanity, was attacked by men who professed to have the same object in view with themselves, and who yet, at every step, were drawing deadly daggers and aiming them at the heart of their opponent. (Applause.) The present was a manifestation of friendship which was, he believed, never witnessed till the men who were the direct foes to the object which they had in view professed, when they were on the eve of effecting their object, to take the work out of their hands—and when it was accomplished, not by the energies of those men but of themselves, would cheat them of their prize and appear before the world as the correctors of those evils which others had seen for years, and in trying to remove which they had been met at every step by the most determined opposition.

Mr. Thompson afterwards stated the course which he intended to pursue in his lecture, and said that as his former addresses had been directed to shew the general evils of colonial slavery—the situation and general character of the slave—the mode in which the system was upheld—by whom and by what variety of means it was sought to palliate its dreadful enormities; so, as that might be the last time he should have the honor of delivering an address in Manchester, he should wish now to do something in the way of summing up the question, by bringing, very concisely and briefly, before his auditory the principal evils which were embodied in the system, to show that not only the general idea of slavery was bad, but that by taking it to pieces and examining its particular parts they might see it was altogether evil—that from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot the monster was nothing but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores. (Applause.)

Slavery, and particularly such slavery as was to be found in the West Indies, cursed the soil upon which it existed, and almost inevitably, wherever it had obtained, whether in our dominions or in the dominions of other powers, had produced barrenness and sterility, and prevented nature from bringing forth her fruits in that measure which other-

wise she would, had the course pursued to obtain them been equitable and just. And how did this result? The people of England had pursued a course of conduct at once the most unjust and at once the most absurd, in making it exceedingly desirable for the West Indian planter to send, at all hazards, as much sugar into this market as the ground could possibly create. So fond, indeed, were we of slavery, that we did not grudge some millions and a half of pounds yearly, in the way of direct bounty, to foster a system under which women were flogged, children were doomed to slavery from the womb, and to every description of evil by which they could be degraded and destroyed. He begged to direct attention to the main argument used to delude the public into a notion that they who were endeavoring to thwart the efforts of the anti-slavery society, were the best friends of the negro, and that they only held them in bondage to nurture and prepare them for that liberty to which it was their desire to introduce them. If this argument was sincere, how did it apply to the infant? Was he not fit for freedom when he came into the world? Must a child be trained in slavery in order to enjoy the bliss of liberty? Was that either a human or a rational course? What had the infant done that even before he came into the world a price was put upon him to render the mother of greater value, and that, from the hour he came into this breathing world, he is consigned to slavery bounded only by that place where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. (Applause.) On their own shewing, he claimed liberty for every infant that breathed. (Loud applause.) The argument of unfitness could not apply to them, and the man who took the infant from its mother's breast, and giving it to another to be fed or suckled, then drove it to work for his profit, his ease or his aggrandisement, under the infliction of stripes that mercy wept to see inflicted on a beast,—such a man was not a whit better than he who took his ship to the western shores of Africa and burdened it with the wretched villagers whom this dastardly planter, knowing nothing of the perils and toils thus sustained, bought and labored in the colonies. (Applause.) Thus were they told that they must not remit the negro because he was unfit for freedom, and yet they were daily introducing them into that state which dis-

qualified them from being useful members of society. They incurred an awful responsibility, and his auditors partook of it if they were concerned in taking men from the land of their birth, and consigning them to the influence of a system which almost forbade improvement, and which never did and never could qualify them for any of the duties or the real and proper pursuits of life. See, (exclaimed the lecturer,) yon tottering slave on the margin of the grave, about for ever to sink from the sight of mortal, and to enter upon that state where no change, as regards character, can be possibly achieved. He is now sunken in vice, exhausted and diseased in body, and knowing not, perhaps, whether a God reigns; he plunges, almost in the dark into that world where man shall be introduced into the presence of a heart-searching judge. What reason is there to believe that that man might not have been an useful, perhaps an ornamental, member of society? (Applause.) He might have been trained to embellish the age in which he lived, and the world of which he had been an inhabitant—he might have risen to honor and independence, and achieved a deathless name! But see him as he is—degraded and despised, reduced to the level of the brute, he dies unpitied, and the curtain closes upon his history. (Applause.)

But it was said that the mother did not regard her offspring—that for her it might pine in neglect, or fall a victim to the absence of maternal sympathy, whilst in truth the mother was driven to the field to labor, when with the fondness of a parent she should have been rearing her infant for useful life. How, he asked, did they prove their assertion? Would a British audience believe it, upon the mere *ipse dixit* of the advocate of a wicked cause. Did the raven feed its young, the tigress care for its offspring, and all the irrational creation, with few exceptions, invariably look with anxiety and care to those whom they brought into existence, and should it be said that the negro mother cared not for her innocent babe? But if she did not, rather than they should be consigned to the tender mercies of a planter, an attorney, an overseer, or a driver, cast them on the bounty of ETERNAL PROVIDENCE, and let him who sees the sparrow when it falls—let him who hears the raven when it cries—let him who numbers the hairs even

on the negro's head take up the child when father and mother forsook it, and let it live for ever on the care of that omniscient BEING. (Loud and continued applause.) Slavery, he contended, depressed the body, whilst it withheld from the mind of the negro all the ordinary motives to incitement. Those by whom he was surrounded knew the thousand claims which they had upon their exertions, and the various demands that were made upon them. They had their wives and children dependent upon them, they looked to the product of their labor for character, and hoped by means of it, to ascend to wealth and honor, and, after the vigor of their days had passed to retire to affluence and ease. Ask the trader (continued Mr. Thompson) why he labors—why he rises early and retires late, and eats the bread of carefulness. It is because he perceives in after years a comfortable subsistence for himself, and because he hopes to provide for his offspring, and to leave them some means of stepping beyond the limit to which he had been born. Ask the sailor why he ploughs the trackless main—it is that he may achieve a conquest over his country's foes, and return to receive the hard-earned tribute of honor and reward, and retiring to the bosom of his family, go at last from this busy world to one of peace, security, and love. Ask the author why he labors, and he will tell you that he hopes to have his name recorded amongst the celebrated of his age. Ask the statesman why he labors—ask any free man why he labors, and you find that necessity of some description is laid on him sufficiently strong to induce him to undertake it, and sufficiently powerful to support him in its performance. But ask the slave why he toiled, and he challenged his opponent to prove that he was under the influence of one of these motives.

Mr. Thompson asserted, upon the authority of Mr. Stephen, that the negro was worked sixteen hours and forty minutes in the day. He contended that among the other evils incident to his lot were the facts that slavery entailed on its unhappy victims all imaginable suffering—that the slave was doomed to the torture of the cart-whip, the collar and chains, the field stocks, the picketing of St. Lucia, the block and tackle of Jamaica—that slavery annihilated the population engaged in it—that the negro was doomed to laws, arbitrary in their character and wickedly adminis-

tered—that ignorance was the inseparable attendant of bondage—that his subjection destroyed the self-respect of the slave, and all consequent moral purity—that on the other hand it raised in the breasts of the planters a spirit of pride and arrogance, and even destroyed the softness of the female character—that the treatment they endured, engendered in the slaves revenge and all other base passions—that slavery endangered the existence of society, and gave rise to conspiracy, rebellion and assassination, and that, above all, it drew upon those engaged in it the wrath of that God whose laws were thus trampled upon.

That slavery endangered the safety of every community in which it existed; we had, he said, a proof in America. Let them look at the planters of Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, and other States. They would find that the owners of slaves were sometimes obliged to sleep in their houses with a number of negro infants around them lest the parents should set fire to their dwellings. (Hear.) Should any power desire to attack America, what more had they to do than to arm the negroes, and lift up the standard of liberty among their habitations. They would thus have planted in the heart of their dominions a system fatal to their independence. The opening words of their declaration of independence were, that all men were equal in the sight of God, and that to deprive a man of his liberty was one of the foulest crimes of which another could be guilty. (Applause.) This *free* and independent people had two millions of slaves, and from five to six hundred thousand free people of color, men as deserving as any of their pale-faced tyrants, and yet were they scouted and repudiated wherever, they bent their steps. So much for freedom—so much for patriotism—so much for reform, a term which always meant reform of our neighbors and never reform of ourselves. (Cheers.) This was the love of liberty which meant liberty to do what pleases ourselves, but let nobody else do as he likes. This was the liberty of our brother Jonathan, (Laughter,) and this was the liberty of his father, John Bull. (Laughter.) Worthy son of a worthy sire! Both must put this abomination from among them, if they would justify their boasted love of liberty before the world, and purge themselves from the stain which slavery had brought upon them. Slavery hated the light—

slavery hated the truth—slavery hated knowledge and religion. Who would deny that slavery loved darkness—that it loved ignorance, that it sought concealment. Light would expose its enormities—would make it blush—religion would denounce it, and reason held it up to the universal execration of mankind. (Applause.)

But it was said that the planters loved religion. They shewed it by pulling down chapels—they shewed it by punishing missionaries—they shewed it by desecrating the Sabbath—by snapping all the ties of moral law, and rejecting all the provisions of the gospel. Yet did they love religion; and it was proved by their union, in Jamaica, to sweep every sectarian from the island. He had heard that persons afflicted with a certain species of mania always killed those whom they loved best. (Applause.) The planters laughed at religion—they banished the missionaries—they demolished the churches, and desecrated the altars of God, and they, therefore, were mad. He hoped, in pity, that they were, and if they did not deserve to be in the dungeons of the New Bailey, the best place for them was a lunatic asylum. (Applause.) But it had been said that the missionaries were interested, that they were cobblers and tailors in their own country, and that they left £30 a-year here, for £250 abroad. And, if they had £2250 it would not compensate them. It would not repay them for the burning sun—the wasting toils—the rending anxieties—for the scorn and contumely, with which they were treated—for the premature and inglorious graves into which many of them were buried—and for the pangs inflicted on their Christian and their faithful hearts. (Loud cheers.) They had been told, too, that if they were the disinterested persons whom they were represented, they should go to the wilds of Africa, and amidst its deserts and sands should inculcate the divine truths which they preached in the islands. And so they did—on the banks of the Gambia they were found, long ago, striving in the great cause to which they were devoted, and finding a grave upon the banks of that far-famed river. With all the perils of the task, palpable to them, did these holy men set forth, from their native land, to preach the gospel of redemption to the oppressed people of those climes; but the earth had not made its revolution round the sun—the season had not

gone by, ere, in Western Africa, their remains were gathered to their fathers, and their spirits went to their reward. {Loud applause} They were to be found with the Laplander midst his snows—if they would go to the plains of Hindostan they would find them there, striving to stay the rolling car of Juggernaut—to stop the misguided hand of a parent who was about to offer an unoffending victim, in penitence for an imaginary wrong—they might be seen snatching the infant from the waters of the Ganges, or tearing it from the jaws of the crocodile. In the temple of the Brahmin, in the hut of the negro, in the wigwam of the Australian—north, east, south and west, they might be found, to convict their libellers of falsehood of irreligion, and of impiety. (Long-continued plaudits.) Mr. Thompson contended that the slave-system caused, as they knew, an absence of sympathy between England, and her colonies—that it was *per se* instable—that in every way it was impolitic—that it was a positive infraction of the constitution, and that it was based in cowardice. For where did we seek our slaves; did we go among the warlike people of the earth, or did we not rather select the most grateful—the most peaceable race, thus rendering those very attributes which should constitute a claim to our regard, and induce us to throw over them the shield of our power—incentivements to our cupidity.

Mr. Thompson then observed :—

There is one branch of this momentous question to which I desire to draw your serious attention :—

1st. Because it has been made the foundation of a defence of slavery as it now exists in our dominions.

2nd. Because it appeals to the feelings of that portion of the community which, above all others, I am desirous of seeing among the friends of negro emancipation.

3rd. Because it involves the high consideration, whether unto us belongs a *discretionary power* to act towards our fellow-men as we are now acting towards our colonial bondsmen; and

4th. Because it affects the honor and equity of that Being 'who doeth according to his will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.'

That part of the subject is this; *the abstract sinfulness of holding men in personal thralldom.* In other words, *can*

any circumstances justify men in holding their fellow-men in slavery, without incurring guilt by so doing? I answer, YES; and the existence or non-existence of certain circumstances creates the justification, or occasions the guilt of the man-stealer or the slave-holder. When such circumstances are *present* he is *justified*. When they are *absent* he is *guilty*. It is argued, by an advocate on the other side, that SLAVERY in the *abstract* is *not* SINFUL; that is to say, to steal a man, and hold him in bondage, is not *prima facie* a SIN. I humbly and submissively contend that it is a sin so to do, and I will proceed to give my reasons:—‘To the law and to the testimony.’ ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;’ and when he had beautified the heavens and adorned the earth, he said, ‘Let us make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness; and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.’ ‘And it was so;’ for the ‘Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.’ Then started into being *that awful—that mysterious—that inexplicable compound Man*—that masterpiece of the creation. *Man!*—*erect*—*rational*—*pure*—*immortal Man!*—*Man!* the lord of the creation—the monarch of the world—the favorite of heaven—the possessor of a deathless spirit—the heir of an eternal destiny. Was he then a slave? No! not even to Deity itself; he held the mighty power to eternize his being and his bliss; or bring into the fair and spotless world of heaven’s munificence the monster death and all imaginable *woe*. He fell—*freely* he *fell*. Behold him where he lies; a noble pile in ruins! Yet survey those ruins; how costly—how magnificent—how imperishable are the fragments! That HE might with those fragments build himself a living temple, the Architect of the universe did not withhold his Son,—His only Son—but gave him up up to death that he might lay in Zion, for a foundation, a *a stone*—a chief corner-stone, elect and precious to give stability, and life and eternal duration to the fabric of his everlasting love. Oh!

How poor, how rich, how abject, how august,—

How complicate, how wonderful, is Man!

Distinguish'd link in being's endless chain !
 Midway from nothing to the Deity !
 A beam ethereal sully'd and absorpt ?
 Though sully'd and dishonor'd, still divine ?
 What can preserve his life ?—or what destroy ?
 An angel's arm can't snatch him from the grave ;
 Legions of angels can't confine him there.

Such a being is *Man*, find him where you may ; however rude, however wretched, of whatever color, of whatever clime—a being born for immortality—as precious in the sight of heaven and in the covenant of grace, as the fairest among the sons of men, though he should centre in himself the learning of a Johnson and the genius of a Milton—and the philosophy of a Bacon and the imagination of a Shakspeare,—a being who may soar as high in heaven, and who will live as long in *eternity* as the *proudest* and *wisest* of the children of *men*.

But to return to the argument before us ; the commands of God touching the enslavement of any member of the human family are explicit. 1st. 'Thou shalt not steal.' This command, which has reference to all descriptions of robbery, must include the stealing of men, which is universally allowed to be the worst description of robbery that can be committed. 2d. 'Thou shalt not *covet* thy neighbour's house, wife, man-servant, maid-servant, ox, ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.' Now I ask—is there belonging to a man any thing more precious than his own *person*, his own liberty? and if the desire to possess the house, or ox, or ass of our neighbor be sinful, is it not equally so, nay, more so, to covet his *life* his *limbs*, his *wife*, and his *children*? 3rd. In *Exodus* 21st, 6th, we read 'He that steal-eth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand he shall surely be put to death.' We see here in what estimation the Almighty held the crime of stealing men. Again, Deut. 24th., 7 v., 'If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him, then that thief shall die : and thou shalt put away evil from among you.' *Maimonides*, *Jarchi*, and the *Mishnic Doctors*, interpret these laws in their strictest sense ; with regard to the latter one, they say, that in the term 'brethren of the children of Israel,' are included the old and the young, the *male* and the *female* ;

the Israelite and the Jewish proselyte; and 'making merchandise,' as using a man against his will, as a servant lawfully purchased, yea, though he should use his services *only* to the value of a farthing, or use but his arm to lean upon or support him, if he be forced so to act as a servant, the person compelling him but once to do so, shall die as a thief, whether he has sold him or not. These passages, I think, clearly point out to us what should be our conduct under *ordinary* circumstances. They teach us that we are not to *steal at all*, not to *covet at all*, and that the *stealing of men*, the making *merchandise of men*, the forcing of men to serve *against their will*, are crimes considered worthy of DEATH. The passage so often quoted, to prove that slavery is not sinful, is to be found in the 25th of *Leviticus*, from the 39th to the 46th verses, inclusive. It is, however, upon the 45th and 46th verses that the argument is principally built; they read thus:—

'Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that *are* with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them* for a possession; they shall be your possession; they shall be your bondmen forever; but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor.

In reference to this passage I would observe, that, to me, it appears highly probable that the expression, 'for ever,' in the text before us, does not apply to the bondmen here spoken of *individually*, but *collectively*: as the tenth verse seems to promise liberty to ALL, both Jew and *Gentile*, at the year of Jubilee.

'And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all the land*, unto ALL the inhabitants *thereof*; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.'

From this passage I infer, that, although the Jews were to be permitted to obtain bondmen from among the strangers who sojourned in the land during the continuance of the Mosaic dispensation, yet at the year of general redemption those who had been reduced to active service were to share the benefit of the proclamation, leaving the Israelites to supply their places by others, who, there is no doubt, might be obtained without any difficulty. Let us for a moment look at this slavery.

1st. Who were the 'heathen round about?' 'the strang-

ers who sojourned in the land?' They were remnants of nations, who had filled up the measure of their iniquity, and against whom the wrath of God was therefore revealed, even '*unto death.*'

2d. They were the inhabitants of a land promised for many centuries to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. A land that was to be purged from the pollution of idolatry, and the most abounding profligacy, and become the theatre of the most stupendous events, and be peculiarly characterised by '*Holiness to the Lord.*'

3d. The bond service to which they were subjected was almost, in all respects, perfectly dissimilar to the degrading slavery which now prevails in the West Indies. In the majority of instances being only the *payment of tribute*, leaving them at liberty to avail themselves of every just means of acquiring wealth; and only preventing them from becoming possessors of the soil which God had given to his '*peculiar people.*' *Purchased servants* were to be treated with especial kindness, and seem, in most cases, to have been a superior order of dependants. Hired servants appear to have been among the meanest of those who bore the name of servants among the heathen, and were generally employed as hewers of wood, and drawers of water, or, in other words, as the bearers of burdens—persons engaged in the lowest occupations.

4th. Their *treatment as servants* was to be invariable distinguished by *kindness*; maltreatment entitled them to instant release; the Sabbath was theirs; the court of the Gentiles was theirs; the way of access to all the benefits temporal and spiritual of the Jewish religion was theirs; as heathens, they were to be treated with uniform justice and tenderness; as *proselytes* or *converts*, in all respects as brethren. I might, if I had time, and it were necessary, fully show you from the inspired volume, that, so far from magnifying the comforts and privileges of the bond servants, under the Mosaic economy, I have very much curtailed the list of their advantages. I might quote the laws which bound the Israelites, under the heaviest penalties, to observe a course of kindness to the slaves; I might specify the arrangements made for their instruction and conversion. I might enumerate the threatenings and denunciations of God against their oppressors, when they

had any, and then, also, the execution of those threats in a variety of awful and premonitory instances; but I forbear, and earnestly recommend all present to peruse with care the first five books of the Old Testament, and mark what is written respecting 'strangers,' '*strangers within the gate,*' in contra-distinction to casual visitors,—STRANGERS THAT SOJOURN AMONGST YOU,'—*servants and bondmen,*' for under these five denominations are, I believe, included all the bond-servants among the Hebrews, save those of their own *nation*.

5th. Having noticed the source from whence the Jews obtained their slaves—and the mode of treatment to which they were subjected, I proceed to observe that *this* institution was by direct appointment of the Almighty, and appears to have been a *commutation* of a sentence of death originally pronounced upon the Canaanitish and Philistine nations, the previous possessors of the soil—let this be well remembered—the Divine head of the Jewish Theocracy, appointed, permitted, regulated, slavery. He was the God and Father and Legislator of the people of Israel. The God also of the heathen round about, though they knew him not—nor feared his name—remember, too, that he is a being above all law, save those eternal rules which are inseparable from his nature, that He is the source of law to the universe, that revealed codes are for man and not for God—and then, I think, you will perceive that slavery might exist among the Jews, and yet not furnish us with an example to be followed, nor do any thing towards establishing our right to be the holders of slaves. The appointment of slavery by God is one of the circumstances which justifies slavery—but the moment the sanction of God is withdrawn, the authority of man is at an end, and he is left to regulate his moral conduct by the revealed law, every violation of which is an offence against his Creator.

6th. It does not appear that to man was given a discretionary power to bring into bondage any portion of his fellow men—on the contrary—the most fearful punishments are assigned to those who are guilty of any infraction of the law in that respect. Had such a discretionary power been ever given—in the day when it was so given, the moral law would have been in effect annulled. In all cases, however, the Jews were but agents, instruments, and ministers

of vengeance in the hands of the Almighty, and were repeatedly chastised for assuming and exercising a power not delegated to them by their Supreme Head. The Jews, however, were showing their obedience as much in the destruction of the Canaanites as in the offering of appointed sacrifices—in the observance of arrangements regarding slavery, as in the performance of any religious service enjoined upon them. But what is the use made of the fact, that God commanded the enslavement of the Canaanitish nations? It is this—that *therefore* slavery is not sinful in the *abstract*, and *therefore* we may hold men in slavery and be guiltless. See, for a moment, where this would lead us. It would lead to the conclusion that the judgments and punishments which God has at any time commanded and authorised his own special people, his avowed and recognised servants, to inflict upon nations and individuals, may, in strict conformity with religion and morality, be inflicted by men upon their fellow-men at *any time*—at any place, and without any such authority or command. By the decree of the *Most High*, a father was commanded to sacrifice his son—Elijah was empowered to slay the false prophets, and the Israelites were enjoined to put to death some, and to enslave others of the idolatrous people whom they conquered in war, and, therefore, we have a moral and religious right to do any or similar things, *without* any similar warrant, sanction, or authority. Excellent logic! Excellent theology! To contend that the enslavement of men is not sinful from the circumstance of its having been permitted by God, in the case argued, *is* unreasonable, unscriptural, impious, and blasphemous.

Were the negroes of Western Africa in the same circumstances as the Canaanites?

Is the slavery in the West Indies like the slavery among the Jews? It is absurd and wicked to denote the two conditions by the same term. When light becomes darkness, and kindness becomes cruelty, and justice and mercy, injustice and oppression, then name them together, and not before, unless you be found guilty of upholding an abomination by the prostitution of the word of God.

Is Africa a land promised to us for a possession, and are we commanded to drive out and *utterly destroy its inhabitants*?

Has West India slavery the sanction of the Almighty?

Can we demonstrate our right to exercise a discretionary power of enslaving our fellow-men?

If British colonial slavery was wrong in its commencement, can we show at which event, in the series connecting the first seizure with the present possession, the change from wrong to right took place? It, however, is admitted that colonial slavery was wrong in its commencement, and is still an *evil* and a *sin*, what becomes of the '*abstract view*,' and from the deductions made from it? If it be argued that it must be done *gradually*—where is the scriptural proof?

Did God ever keep men in slavery to prepare them for freedom? Do not the Oracles of God declare, 'Live peaceably with all men. Revenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine: I will repay it saith the Lord?' Are we, then, to put ourselves on an equality with God? Shall we

Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge his justice, be the God of God?

Let these questions be pondered, let them be answered in the fear of God, and in reference to eternity.

I will not detain you—I might say, insult you, after the addresses I have already delivered in this town, by going into the views of Christianity on this subject. You require no proof to-night that the religion of Christ is a *religion of love*, and that it never has, it never can, sanction for a moment, so foul, so inhuman, so impious, and murderous a system as that of **BRITISH WEST INDIA SLAVERY**.

Mr. Thompson then proceeded to expose the various contradictions of his opponents,—proved the absolute necessity of **IMMEDIATE** emancipation—congratulated the meeting upon the view recently taken of the question by the leading daily journals in London, read a very powerful leading article from the *Morning Chronicle*, of Saturday, the 13th instant (which will be found at the conclusion of this outline,) and concluded as follows:—

And now I would humbly, but earnestly, call upon all present to join in this work of mercy, and labor of love.

Christian Ministers! I call first upon you; ye are

ambassadors for God—your God is a God of love, your mission a mission of mercy, your message a message of salvation—

By you the violated law speaks out
Its thunders, and by you, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.

In the name of the law, which, by slavery, is dishonored, violated, and trampled in the dust; in the name of the gospel, whose precepts and provisions are by slavery and its abettors despised and rejected; in the name of that God—the giver of the law, and the author and finisher of that gospel of salvation—I call upon you to denounce this evil, to lift up your voice against it, to cry aloud and spare not until it ceases to ‘make merchandise of the bodies and the souls of men.’

Philanthropists!—lovers of mankind—I call upon you, ye who would raise the fallen, cheer the faint, who would lessen the amount of human wretchedness, who would wipe the weeping eye and gladden the sinking heart, who would that our wide-spread race should be a family of love—join us in the cause of humanity: Oh, weep with the wretched mother who may not call her offspring her own; Oh, sympathise with those whom a cruel system would put beyond the pale of our constitution and our faith; let your best energies be given to this holy undertaking, nor slacken your endeavors until mercy shall prevail over cruelty, justice triumph over oppression and tyranny, and the lovely isles of the west, after ages and centuries of murder, oppression, and woe, shall become the abode of the happy and free peasant, and reverberate with the song of gladness, and the praises of the true and living God.

Patriots! Ye who love your country, to whom its honor, its character and independence are dear, unite with us to rid our beloved country from this foul curse; let not any portion of its greatness rest upon the degradation of its children; talk not of victory while this conquest remains to be achieved; boast not of our constitution whilst its benefits are withheld from the negro; let heroes seek for laurels upon the ensanguined plain, ‘let others strive to exalt their country’s greatness by advancing the arts, and adding to our stock of scientific knowledge, do ye unite

with us to win a bloodless triumph over your country's worst foes—the avarice, the despotism and impiety that would sink a nation's fame, and bring upon it the wrath of God, to gratify a lust of power, and add to the unhallowed wealth of the tormentor of his species.

I look around me, and I see many belonging to that community whose religious profession amounts almost to a pledge of devotion to this glorious cause. Need I say any thing to stimulate your zeal, and dispose you to act worthy your name and connexion; need I remind you of the struggles, the sacrifices and disinterested ardor of the Friends of past ages; and of the noble endeavors making by many amongst you at the present hour? No; I would fain believe that there is not one Friend here who is not self-devoted to the cause of negro emancipation. But still, suffer me to remind you, with all possible respect and love, that the present is a moment demanding even more than wonted zeal. I implore you, by the memory of a Woolman, and a Benezet, and every champion of this hallowed cause now gathered to his fathers, to aid us at the present juncture, with the full measure of your sympathy, your exertions, and your influence—so shall you see the dearest object of your heart accomplished, and, instead of still mourning over the unredressed wrongs of an injured population, see peace and piety, and intellectual improvement, extending to the many colored tribes of the west, and the fruits of virtue, and knowledge, and religion appearing where only ignorance, and vice, and cruelty once reigned.

Come, then, ye lovers of peace—ye votaries of mercy—complete the work begun in ages past, by your uncompromising forefathers, and soon shall the shouts of ransomed thousands proclaim the field your own, and the sable child of your adoption, trampling on the rusting chains of his degradation, exclaim with beaming eye and with a bursting heart, 'NOW I am a man and a brother.'

Christians! I look with confidence towards you; yours is a religion of love, a religion of liberty; you know that the love of Christ in your own bosoms expands them to embrace all mankind,—you desire 'that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you;' you know that 'righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people;' you know that

'to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams;' you know that it is written, 'If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth he not know it? and shall he not render to every man according to his works?' Unite, then, with us to rid the nation and the earth of their most foul and guilt-contracting blot; let the remembrance of demolished temples, their ruins still upon the earth—of desecrated altars—of banished missionaries—of thousands of meek disciples of Christ, persecuted for their attachment to the truths of Christianity—let these recollections act upon your hearts, your consciences, your hands, your heads, and your families, and in your congregations, and in the world be the champions of the distressed—despised, and almost destroyed—so shall the blessing of those who are ready to perish come upon you, and GOD, even your own GOD shall cause his face to shine upon you, and his richest consolations to inhabit your hearts.

And now, I ask, in this solemn hour, in this sacred place, upon this spirit-stirring and most interesting occasion—who in this assembly is willing to consecrate his service this night unto the Lord? Let all who feel the claims of human misery pressing upon their hearts, who wish to see the monster slavery expire beneath the hand of British Christian benevolence; let all who have trust in the omnipotence of truth, and confidence in the GOD of everlasting love; let all who now desire, and pray for, and would effectuate the instant, total, and eternal overthrow of the accursed system, and are waiting to build upon its ruins a temple of harmony, concord, peace and love, witness these their wishes and intentions, before heaven and the world, by holding up their hands. [The call was instantly responded to, and a forest of hands was uplifted.]

'Tis done, 'tis seen, it will be known, it will be recorded in heaven, and on earth; 'tis wise; 'tis well so to resolve—'tis still better to act on such resolutions. Patriots! Philanthropists! Christians of every name! Ministers of God! we are now ONE—this night beholds the renewal of our pledge, to wage a war of extermination with cruelty,

vice, and despotism in their strong hold. 'In the name of our God, let us set up our banner,' and inscribe upon it, 'Fiat justitia ruat coelum.' With this above our heads, let us proceed onwards to the battle—victory shall sit upon our helm, heaven shall smile upon our host, conquest shall crown our struggle, and mankind in future ages shall point to the abolition of colonial slavery, as the commencement of an era the most benign and brilliant the world has ever seen.

Mr. Thompson concluded his energetic, eloquent, and convincing address at a quarter past nine, amidst the enthusiastic plaudits of an enraptured audience. Throughout the whole of Mr. Thompson's lengthened observations, the most profound and breathless attention was manifested, interrupted only by the involuntary bursts of applause which the more splendid and heart-stirring portions of his able speech called forth. One feeling only seemed to pervade the vast assembly, and that, a feeling of hallowed devotion to the godlike cause of negro civilization and redemption. A deep conviction seemed to rest upon all, that the hour had arrived—an hour too long delayed—for the opening of the prison doors of the oppressed, and the political salvation of the deeply injured thousands of our enslaved population. No portion of the lecturer's remarks were more cordially responded to, than those which enforced the justice and necessity of immediate emancipation.

Mr. Thompson seemed considerably exhausted at the termination of his arduous but well-executed task. We understand that Mr. Thompson has received the most flattering invitations to visit the principal places in all the surrounding counties. We earnestly hope that his health may be spared to prosecute his valuable labors to a happy and glorious consummation.

NOTE.

[From the London Morning Chronicle, Sept. 1832.]

A Jamaica paper of the 1st of August has been received. In the absence of events, the bitter animosity against the Baptists and other sectarians may deserve a remark. Resolutions were moved and carried at a public meeting, to extirpate them, if possible, from the island; but notice had been given by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, that several of the resolutions were illegal. However, in order not to be intimidated, all the resolutions were unanimously passed, and among them, the following atrocious Declaration.

‘ We, the undersigned, most solemnly declare, that we are resolved, at the hazard of our lives, not to suffer any Baptist or other sectarian preacher or teacher, or any person professedly belonging to those sects, to preach or to teach in any house in towns, or in any districts of the country where the influence of the Colonial Union extends; and this we do—maintaining the purest loyalty to his majesty king WILLIAM the fourth, as well as the highest veneration for the established religion, in defence of social order, and in strict conformity with the laws for the preservation of the public peace—to shield this portion of his majesty’s island of Jamaica against insurrection and future destruction.’

And this is a sample of what we may expect from the gradual amelioration scheme. The truth is, and it cannot be too often repeated, that the hostility of the West Indians against the Baptists and other sectarians is, that they perceived that they were in earnest to improve the negroes. Slavery is not susceptible of amelioration; for, in the degree in which the slave’s mind is enlarged, his dissatisfaction with his condition increases. There is no medium between abject prostration and complete emancipation. All the attempts to bolster up slavery, by protectors of slaves and otherwise, only makes the matter worse, by weakening the authority of the masters over the slaves. The moment the slave ceases to be wholly and entirely in the power of the master, a source of jealousy between them springs up. We hold, therefore, that emancipation, full and complete, is the only way of settling the question.

The sectarians enjoy the confidence of the negroes, and

are deeply interested in their improvement: This is the head and front of their offending, in the eyes of the West Indians. But who are the sectarians? Including the serious part of the Church of England, it may be said that the sectarians are nine-tenths of the population of the country. They are determined, too, not to be trifled with. A man must, indeed, be unable to see the wood for trees, if he do not see, that the partisans of what the West Indians call sectarians, will introduce into the next Parliament a sufficient number of representatives, prepared to impose on the government the necessity of bringing the question of slavery to the only issue worthy of a moment's consideration—full and complete, and instant emancipation, leaving the question of compensation to be afterwards settled.

